

EDINBURGH GRADUATION CEREMONIAL,

DEGREES FOR COLONIAL PREMIERS.

In July 1882 the University of Edinburgh did fitting honour to men who in various capacities were doing public service in the furthest limits of the British Empire. On that occasion the recipients of the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws included Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Canada; Sir Edmund Barton, Australia; the late R. J. Seddon, New Zealand; Sir Albert H. Hime, Natal; Sir Robert Bond, Newfoundland; and Sir J. Gordon Sprigg, Cape Colony. At the spring graduation ceremonial yesterday advantage was taken of the presence of other Colonial statesmen in the country to still further add to the University's roll of honour, and at the same time to prove that the ancient centre of learning in the old capital of Scotland is not inappreciative of merit and public service, in whatever part of the Empire it may be found. The intention of the Senatus was to confer the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws on the Prime Ministers of New Zealand, Cape Colony, Natal, Australia, and the Transvaal. The three first-named were in a position to accept the invitation of the University yesterday, but Mr Alfred Deakin, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia, and General Botha, Prime Minister of the Transvaal, were unable to be in Scotland at this time. It is hoped that on a future occasion they will travel north to accept the honour which it is the pleasure of the academic authorities to offer them. The presence of the three Colonial statesmen lent to yesterday's ceremonial something more than its usual distinction. The other recipients of honorary degrees included men of mark in the Church, in surgery, in the law, and in letters. In addition, there was a long list of students who have emerged successfully from the ordeal of examination, and who appeared in order that the venerable Principal might set to their achievements the final seal of the University.

The ceremony took place in the McEwan Hall. Never was the handsome building more crowded. While the audience were assembling, Mr T. H. Collinson, organist to the University, played an interesting selection on the organ. Shortly after ten o'clock the academic procession entered the hall. Principal Sir William Turner, the Vice-Chancellor, occupied the chair. On his right hand were seated Lord Provost Gibson, and on his left hand Sir John Baird Tuke, M.P. Around him were seated the members of the Senatus and other eminent citizens, including Sir James Russell, Dr Joseph Bell, Principal Laurin, Dr Hew Morrison, and Mr William Grant, Master of the Merchant Company. Professor Patrick opened the proceedings with prayer. In contrast with some former occasions, when a noisy display of exuberance laid the students open to criticism, the proceedings throughout were characterised by dignity, quietness, and decorum.

THE HONORARY DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF DIVINITY.

The Rev. Professor Patrick, Dean of the Faculty of Divinity, presented the gentlemen on whom the Senatus had resolved to confer the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.

PROFESSOR FRANCIS CRAWFORD BURKITT.

The Dean of the Faculty of Divinity, in presenting Francis Crawford Burkitt, M.A., F.B.A., Norrinian Professor of Divinity, University of Cambridge, said Mr Burkitt's career at the University of Cambridge was one of high distinction, and was marked by the conquest, one after another, of the coveted prizes, such as the Carus Prize, the Jerrinis Prize, the Kaye Prize, the Tyrwhitt Scholarship, awarded for special excellence in various departments of Biblical criticism. He was for some time University Lecturer in Palaeography in Cambridge, and since 1885 has been Norrinian Professor of Divinity there. He has made many important contributions to Theological Science—to Patristics, to Ecclesiastical History, to New Testament criticism—all marked by the same fairness and thoroughness, the same unswerving accuracy of scholarship, the same liberal outlook, the same sure grasp of things essential. As typical specimens it must suffice to name "The Rules of Tyconius" in 1894, "The Old Latin and the Itala" in 1895, "Early Eastern Christianity" in 1904, and "The Gospel History and its Transmission" in 1906. It is, however, mainly by his series of studies on the Syriac versions of the New Testament, and, in particular, by his edition of the old Syriac version of the Gospels—the "Evangelion da Meppharreshé"—in 1904, that Mr Burkitt has won for himself an altogether unique place among living New Testament scholars. That work belongs to a sphere where few can walk with confidence, still less with authority; where criticism or praise, save on the part of experts, were alike an impertinence; but it may be said that his results, if accepted, would revolutionise our conception of the relationship of the Syriac versions and modify ruling hypotheses in textual criticism, and, notwithstanding, they have already received the assent of many, if not of most, competent to speak on the subject. Though the Norrinian Chair of Divinity was founded a hundred and thirty years ago, and by its constitution is tenable by a layman, Mr Burkitt is the first layman that has been appointed to the office; and as the patronage of the Chair is in the hands of the heads of colleges, his appointment, in view of the form and direction of academic tradition, is a striking tribute to his standing among his colleagues. (Applause.) I present to you, sir, in Professor Burkitt a scholar of the foremost rank, worthy to take his place with the most eminent representatives of English scholarship and thought whose names it has been our privilege to inscribe on the roll of honorary graduates in Divinity. (Applause.)